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VII.—*Narrative of a Journey from Lagos to Odé, the Capital of the Ijebu Country, in the month of January, 1862.* By CAPTAIN BEDINGFELD, R.N.

Read, April 27, 1863.

My object in visiting Odé was to ascertain the feelings of the king with regard to the war waging between the Eghas and Thaddans, and also to induce him to keep the roads open through his country in the event of our sending messengers to Dr. Baikie, on the Niger. I had a special invitation to go and visit him, and as, with the exception of the Rev. Mr. Champneys (a Wesleyan minister), he had never seen a white man, the present was considered a good opportunity for accepting it.

I took with me Lieut. Dolbin, of H.M.S. *Prometheus*, and my interpreter. We hired a canoe at Lagos, and started at 10 P.M. on the 12th January, hoping to reach Eginé Market (a distance of about 35 miles) by noon the next day. I had arranged to meet Tappa and some other chiefs of Kosoko's, and hold a palaver with reference to the affairs of the market. We experienced a strong head-wind, however, and did not arrive at our destination until 4 P.M., when the chiefs had given us up, and left for an extensive farm of Tappa's, on the opposite side of the lagoon. A messenger was at once sent over, and we soon saw the large war canoe of my old friend dashing across for the landing.

We started at 8 A.M. the following morning, notwithstanding a serious engagement had taken place a day or two before with an adjoining hostile tribe, which had plunged the whole community into mourning. Our party consisted of Lieut. Dolbin and myself on horses, and Mr. Turner in a hammock, the interpreter, William Jones, and six carriers with the luggage. Our course was at first about north-east, and lay through forest-land extensively cleared, and dotted with villages. About noon we came to the large village of "Omu," where an unfortunate affair happened that will be perhaps worth relating, as it might have put an end to our journey, and probably our lives.

We halted here under the "Bay tree" (to be found in the centre of most African villages), when some men passed, having on their heads pots of palm wine. My thirsty carriers requested me to purchase some for them, which I consented to do, and they hailed the men to stop. This, however, they did not seem inclined to do, and the King's messenger, who was with us, possibly wishing to show his importance, ran after them, and caught hold of one of the pots. The owner immediately drew a sort of short sword, and made a cut at him. The blow was evaded, and nothing more

would have occurred, had not one of our carriers, in an excess of zeal for the dignity of a royal messenger, cut the man down. In less time than it takes to relate it, the whole village turned out with muskets, swords, and all sorts of offensive weapons, and we seemed in for a fight. Mr. Turner, Lieut. Dolbin, and myself ran down amongst them, and luckily succeeded in stopping it for the time. But as they were evidently working themselves into a rage, and the screaming of the women rendering it impossible to get a hearing, or to reason with them, after several ineffectual attempts I directed the messenger to send our carriers the nearest way out of the town, and Lieut. Dolbin and I mounted and brought up the rear, keeping our revolvers ready for an attack. In this order we beat a retreat in safety, with all our people, except the man who had struck the blow, who, it afterwards appeared, thought it prudent to bolt altogether. Reaching Eginé Market, he spread the intelligence that we had been attacked and all killed. He then took a canoe in the night, and made himself scarce.

On arriving at the next village, I sent for the elders, and informed them of what had taken place at Omu, expressing my regret that a man should have been wounded in such a foolish way. They informed me (with a request that I would not make myself uncomfortable) that "they were a very quarrelsome lot at that village, and that killing a few of them would do much good."

We arrived at Odé without further accident between two and three afternoon, and were conducted to the house of the "Olmoo" (one of the principal chiefs), whose duty it is to receive strangers. After the usual amount of ceremony and compliments, the king sent to inform us he would see us on the morrow, and we were left to the attentions of the "Olmoo," who certainly did his best to make our stay of three days as comfortable as possible.

Our interview with the king ("Oujelly") took place after dark, according to the usual custom. We found him in a small house surrounded by his principal chiefs. On being introduced, I offered to shake hands, when his people all exclaimed I should poison or bewitch him; but he at once held out his hand, and gave me a hearty shake. I told him I was glad he had more confidence than his people. He said, "You must not be offended at them, as few of them have ever seen white men before." He also informed me that he would have waived the custom of "seeing the King at night" in my case, had it not been that during the whole day his yard had been full of people wailing and mourning for the dead. We then had a most interesting conversation for about two hours. I found him most intelligent both in his questions and answers. He dismissed us with every assurance of personal friendship, stating he would always be glad to see me again. As soon as the war

was over, he wished to open out his country to legitimate commerce, and to become better acquainted with white men.

Odé seems about N.N.E. from Eginé, some 26 miles distant. The country we travelled through was undulating forest-land, extensively cleared for cultivation. Corn-fields were to be seen as far as the eye could reach. I have never in any part of Africa seen so much cultivation.

The road, or more properly *bridle-path*, is beautifully shaded nearly the whole distance: it apparently being the rule not to clear away the trees nearer than about 20 feet on either side.

The villages are numerous, large, and clean; the houses built substantially of bright red clay. Odé is surrounded by a thick wall of this clay, with a deep ditch on the outside. It is said to be 12 miles round. The houses are somewhat scattered and separate from each other on account of the danger of fire. There is a good supply of water from a stream running through the town, but they have no wells. This stream runs into the lagoon, about 6 miles to the westward of Eginé Market. It is not navigable even for canoes. They have no name for it, but I believe it to be the Oshun.

Corn is the principal food of the people. Casada is seldom used.

On the death of the king (Oujelly), one of his sons is elected by the elders without reference of seniority, and when once made king he can never show himself outside his house in the daytime; and although he may move about privately at night, yet he must not be recognised. This also applies to the principal chief, who is called Ogh'hony'ogy, and is constantly in attendance on the king.

The second chief, "Olmoo," is the principal man of business. He receives all the king's visitors and strangers, tries all minor offences, and presides over the elders when there is a trial for life. Having tried the case, the king only can give sentence of death.

The position of an elder is hereditary, and the class is selected from among the heads of the principal families, who are called "Appéno." The king's messengers are also men of some importance: they are called "Banghala."

The religion, like that of other Africans, is gross fetishism; both human beings and animals being occasionally offered in sacrifice.

On our return through the village of Omu, we found that the people acquitted us entirely of blame in the business of the fight; and, indeed, the king told us that if the man had lived he should have punished him severely for having drawn his sword on his messenger. We, however, presented the poor old mother of the man killed with two bags of cowries, which were thankfully re-

ceived and seemed to have a good effect. We got back without accident of any kind, paying Kosoko a visit on our way.

In conclusion, I must mention an incident to show the strength of the lady portion of the inhabitants; both male and female are a remarkably tall, fine race. One of my trunks, containing several heavy articles, was declared too much for one man to carry. One after the other stepped out, and declared it impossible. A woman standing by asked permission to feel the weight, and, having done so, offered to carry it. I told the man whose duty it was, that if he could not carry it I should dismiss him and hire the woman. He again refused, saying it would kill him: so my lady friend got another woman to put it on her head, and away she trotted and kept ahead of us the whole way down—25 miles—she being the first to arrive at the market. I was so pleased with her performance that I ordered her double hire, much to the delight of all the women, who *chaffed* the men dreadfully for their lack of strength.

VIII.—*On the Physical Geography of the Malay Archipelago.*

By ALFRED RUSSELL WALLACE, Esq., F.R.G.S., &c. &c.

Read, June 8, 1863.

THE Malay or Indian Archipelago is that extensive group of islands which occupies the space between south-eastern Asia and Australia, and divides the Indian from the Pacific Ocean. From whatever point of view we survey this portion of the earth's surface—whether as regards its superficial extent, or the immense number of islands with which it is overspread, or the individual size of those islands; whether we examine their peculiarities of climate, or their geological structure, their rich and varied vegetation, their wonderful animal productions, or the strongly-contrasted races of mankind that inhabit them; or if, lastly, we look at them from a commercial and political point of view, noting the varied products which they furnish to supply the necessities and luxuries of mankind, trace the struggles of the chief nations of Europe for a share in their fertile soil, and watch the interesting moral and political problems now being worked out there; we shall be convinced that no part of the world can offer a greater number of interesting facts for our contemplation, or furnish us with more extensive and varied materials for speculation in almost every great department of human knowledge.

On the present occasion I propose to give a sketch of what is most interesting in the physical geography of this region, including